

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims replaces all prior listings of claims.

1. (Original) A method of distributing content to consumers, the method comprising:
 - allowing a consumer to join a community;
 - monitoring access to content by members of the community;
 - determining a community interest in the content in response to members of the community accessing the content; and
 - automatically distributing the content to the consumer over a distribution network in response to the community interest.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein:
 - the community interest is determined based on the percentage of members in the community that have accessed the content.
3. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein:
 - the community interest is compared to a reference to initiate the automatically distributing
4. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein:
 - the automatically distributing includes storing the content on a consumer storage device associated with the consumer.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4 further comprising:

notifying the consumer that the content is available on the consumer storage device; and
billing the consumer upon the consumer accessing the content on the consumer storage device.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein:

the automatically distributing the content is dependent on a consumer preference to receive automatically distributed content.

7. (Original) A system for distributing content to consumers, the system comprising:

a network element receiving a request from a consumer to join a community;
a database coupled to the network element maintaining records of one or more communities associated with the consumer;
a consumer network in communication with the network element;
the network element monitoring access to content by members of the community;
the network element determining a community interest in the content in response to members of the community accessing the content;
the network element automatically distributing the content to the consumer network in response to the community interest.

8. (Original) The system of claim 7 wherein:

the community interest is determined based on the percentage of members in the community that have accessed the content.

9. (Original) The system of claim 8 wherein:

the community interest is compared to a reference to initiate the automatically distributing

10. (Original) The system of claim 7 wherein:

the consumer network includes a consumer storage device;
the network element automatically distributing the content to the consumer storage device associated with the consumer.

11. (Original) The system of claim 10 wherein:

the network element notifies the consumer that the content is available on the consumer storage device;
the network element billing the consumer upon the consumer accessing the content on the consumer storage device.

12. (Original) The system of claim 7 wherein:

the network element automatically distributes the content in dependence on a consumer preference to receive automatically distributed content.

13. (Original) The system of claim 7 wherein:

the network element includes a plurality of network elements arranged in a grid computing network.

14. (Original) A storage medium encoded with machine-readable computer program code for distributing content to consumers, the storage medium including instructions for causing at least one network element to implement a method comprising:

allowing a consumer to join a community;
monitoring access to content by members of the community;
determining a community interest in the content in response to members of the community accessing the content; and
automatically distributing the content to the consumer over a distribution network in response to the community interest.

15. (Original) The storage medium of claim 14 wherein:

the community interest is determined based on the percentage of members in the community that have accessed the content.

16. (Original) The storage medium of claim 15 wherein:

the community interest is compared to a reference to initiate the automatically distributing

17. (Original) The storage medium of claim 14 wherein:

the automatically distributing includes storing the content on a consumer storage device associated with the consumer.

18. (Original) The storage medium of claim 17 further comprising instructions for causing at least one network element to implement:

notifying the consumer that the content is available on the consumer storage device; and

billing the consumer upon the consumer accessing the content on the consumer storage device.

19. (Original) The storage medium of claim 14 wherein:

the automatically distributing the content is dependent on a consumer preference to receive automatically distributed content.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein:

the content includes at least one of video, audio and consumer-generated content.

21. (Cancelled)

22. (New) A controller for controlling distribution of content, the controller comprising:

means for receiving input from a consumer to join a community;

means for receiving content having a community interest in the content in response to members of the community accessing the content; and

means for notifying the consumer that the content is available.